

**File No. Q-14011/02/2026-CPW**  
**Government of India**  
**Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change**  
**(CP Division)**  
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2nd Floor, Jal Wing  
Indira Paryavaran Bhawan  
Jor Bag Road, Aliganj  
New Delhi-110003

Dated: 14<sup>th</sup> May, 2026

**OFFICE MEMORANDUM**

**Subject: Dissemination of information regarding "Adverse health effects of online gaming on youth"-reg.**

The undersigned is directed to refer to O.M. dated 30.04.2026 received from Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (copy enclosed) enclosing a note on the adverse health effects of online gaming on youth and requesting for wider publication and circulation.

2. In view of the above, the said note on the adverse health effects of online gaming is hereby forwarded to all divisions for wider circulation and dissemination.

This issues with the approval of Competent Authority.

**Encl.:** As above

Yours sincerely,

*N. Subrahmanyam*  
(N.Subrahmanyam) 14/5/26  
Scientist 'E'

Email: n.subrahmanyam@gov.in

To,

- (i) All Divisional Heads, MoEFCC
- (ii) Sr. Tech Director, NIC, MoEFCC- for arranging to upload on Ministry's website.

File No.Z.28020/83/2025-CDN  
Government of India  
Ministry of Health & Family Welfare  
Department of Health & Family Welfare  
(Coordination Division)

Kartavya Bhawan-1, 1st Floor,  
A-Wing, NewDelh  
Dated:30-04-2026

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

**Subject: The adverse health effects of online gaming on youth.**

The undersigned is directed to refer to The Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Act, 2025 ("PROG ACT/ACT"). A note on the adverse health effects of online gaming on youth is enclosed as Annexure for wider publication and circulation in your Ministry/Department.

2. This issues with the approval of Competent Authority.

Encl: As mentioned above.

Digitally signed by  
Guite Elsy Thang Biak Lun

Date: 30-04-2026

18:45:18

(Guite Elsy Thang Biak Lun)  
Under Secretary to the Govt. of India  
Tele. No.: 011-24013338

To,  
All Ministry/Department, Govt. of India

## Annexure

### Adverse Health Effects of Online Gaming

#### 1. Introduction

Online gaming has become an integral part of everyday life, particularly among adolescents and young adults. With easy access through smartphones, computers, and gaming consoles, gaming is widely used for entertainment and social interaction. Gaming in moderation is not harmful. However, when it becomes excessive, difficult to control, or begins to interfere with daily responsibilities, it can negatively affect both mental and physical health. The World Health Organization has recognized Gaming Disorder as a health condition in the International Classification of Diseases (ICD) (1), indicating that problematic gaming can resemble behavioral addiction in some individuals.

#### 2. When Does Gaming Become Problematic?

Gaming may become a concern when individuals :

- Spend excessive time playing
- Neglect studies, work, or responsibilities
- Skip meals or compromise sleep
- Reduce social interaction
- Feel unable to cut down despite negative consequences

These patterns often develop gradually and may not be immediately recognized.

#### 3. Impact on Mental Health

Excessive gaming can adversely affect mental health:

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- Psychological distress: Increased mental fatigue, low mood, and reduced motivation.
- Reduced concentration: Difficulty focusing on academic or work tasks
- Avoidance coping: Gaming used to escape real-life stressors

- Dependence cycle: Temporary relief reinforces repeated gaming behavior

Individuals with problematic gaming patterns are more likely to experience higher levels of psychological distress.

#### **4. Behavioural and Social Consequences**

Studies, including those conducted in India, have shown:

- Reduced self-confidence
- Increased impulsivity
- Difficulty maintaining relationships
- Reduced real-world social interaction

Over time, individuals may withdraw socially, prefer virtual engagement, and experience loneliness despite being active online.

#### **5. Effects on Sleep**

Excessive gaming disrupts normal sleep patterns:

- Delayed sleep due to late-night gaming
- Difficulty initiating sleep
- Daytime fatigue and poor alertness
- Impaired mood, memory, and performance

#### **6. Risk of Severe Mental Health Outcomes**

Evidence suggests an association between excessive gaming/screen use and

- Emotional distress
- Self-harm thoughts and suicidal ideation

Gaming alone does not directly cause these outcomes; however, it may exacerbate existing vulnerabilities such as stress, loneliness, or emotional difficulties.

Concerns have also been raised in Indian studies regarding certain gaming formats, including fantasy gaming platforms, particularly when financial and emotional stressors are involved.

## 7. Physical Health Effects

### a) Reduced Physical Activity

- Sedentary lifestyle
- Weight gain and reduced fitness
- Increased long-term health risks

### b) Eye-related Problems

- Eye strain and dryness
- Blurred vision
- Headaches due to prolonged screen exposure

### c) Posture-related Issues

- Neck and back pain
- Muscle stiffness
- Long-term musculoskeletal problems

## 8. Gaming and Stress

Although gaming is often perceived as relaxing, prolonged or competitive gaming may:

- Increase stress and performance pressure
- Lead to frustration and irritability
- Result in mental exhaustion rather than relief

## 9. Why Gaming Can Become Excessive

Modern games are designed to increase engagement through:

- Rewards, levels, and achievements
- Continuous progression systems
- “Loot boxes” and chance-based rewards

These features encourage repeated use and may resemble gambling-like behavior.

## 10. Conclusion

Excessive online gaming can negatively impact:

- Mental health (stress, low mood, poor concentration)
- Social functioning (isolation, relationship difficulties)

- Sleep (disturbances and fatigue)
- Physical health (inactivity, eye strain, posture issues)

These effects often develop gradually and can significantly affect daily functioning if not addressed.

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